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485 inns of Shensi and Kansu, which we very seldom used, are also not bad, being large and roomy, and constructed mainly with a view to the accommodation of plenty of animals in the courtyard. I have a particular aversion to the Szechuan inn, usually considered, especially by the Chinese, as providing the height of luxury on the road; they are always crowded in between the other houses of a narrow street, and invariably have the defect of placing the *shang fang* (the chief guest room) next door to the *mao fang*, a revolting arrangement for a night's rest, which the Chinese do not seem to object to.

271 Ch'ingchia Yi was the first place where we struck brackish water, and from here on to within two days of Lanchou I found it scarcely potable. This is a very real trial in the dry season in Central Kansu, and though in the course of our journeys brackish water was of frequent occurrence, we never became accustomed to it, and found it a great hardship to be greeted with a cup of salted tea at the end of a hot day on the road. After the rains have 312 fallen the water is said to sweeten. We were warned of this, of course, but were told that the Mahomedans collected sweet rainwater in specially prepared pits, called *chiao shui*; but owing to lack of rain most of these pits were dry, or contained only a little evil-looking liquid loess mud. I believe that water in pure loess is usually brackish, but in most parts streams or wells are available in the underlying rock; this portion of Central Shensi, however, is in the heart of the loess watershed between the Wei and Yellow rivers, lying mostly over 6000 feet above sea level, and it is the streams themselves which are the worst to drink. I thought I did not know what real thirst was till crossing Central Kansu at the driest season of the year, but later on, when traversing a portion of the Alashan desert further west in early August, we longed even for the salted tea of Huining.

487 From Ch'ingchia Yi the road continues to ascend the same defile for ten li, crosses a pass in the loess, and descends 133 by a similar ravine leading west. Several hamlets mostly in ruins are passed, including the walled posting stage of Chaichia Tsui. These ruins, now more than fifty years old, 669 which become increasingly frequent as one proceeds west, are part of the trail of desolation left by General Tso's

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the North West after Hsian Fu, and all the trade there is in the province converges upon it. Traders from Tientsin, Szechuan, Turkestan, Mongolia, Siberia, Tibet, and even India may be met with in its streets.

Kansu is considered by the Chinese of other provinces to be a dreadfully bitter place (*k'u ti hen*), nothing but wild Mahomedans and no rice to speak of; but for a European it is in many ways the pick of the eighteen provinces. Lanchou lies a little under 5000 feet above sea-level, which in that latitude means a white man's climate, no mosquitoes, and the wearing of European clothing all the year round. As regards food, excellent wheat flour, mutton, and milk are always obtainable, the two latter often scarce in other parts of China, and game is extraordinarily abundant in many regions. I have only one complaint to make against Kansu and that is the brackish water in certain parts. At Lanchou itself there are springs of sweet water at Wuch'uan Shan, a collection of temples on the hills immediately to the south of the city, and the Yellow River water is also good after it has been allowed to stand and clear itself.

Lanchou being situated near some of the best sheeps-wool producing regions of Asia, and the climate being essentially a northern one, common sense indicates it as a suitable centre for a cloth-making industry. This was recognized as long ago as the days of the great General Tso, who established a cloth factory, which was subsequently modernised during the comparatively progressive and constructive era preceding the Revolution by the introduction of modern foreign machinery and several Belgian instructors. But the Revolution put an end to progress in this enterprise as in so many others, and the foreigners have now all departed, and the factory does not flourish. All the same, on my departure from Lanchou, the Governor insisted on my taking away, as mementoes of progress in Kansu, two locally manufactured blankets, made, I think, of camels' hair, which were really first-class articles, and hard to beat anywhere for warmth and good wearing utility. There ought to be a large market for native-made cloth amongst the Kokonor Tibetans and beyond, but the trade seems never to have been developed successfully. There are also other so-called factories, for the manufacture of matches, soap, etc.,

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to cultivation, has of course had a great effect on the good results obtained. It now remains to be seen whether suppression can be maintained after the withdrawal of this foreign stimulus. In the eastern provinces where the upper and middle classes are more or less in contact with the West a strong native public opinion now exists against opium; the same cannot be said of the backward North West; and it is there that the authorities will have to watch for recrudescence of cultivation. As regards the suppression of smoking and consumption generally, the same success has by no means been attained, and in out of the way parts it appears to be indulged in much as formerly. In view of the increasing scarcity of the drug, however, and the rising price, this cannot really be the case, and if suppression of cultivation is strictly adhered to, the existing stocks will gradually be exhausted, and the rising generation will grow up without contracting the opium habit.

We rested at Liangchou for a day, being entertained by the officials, and then left for Chenfan, distant three marches. The first stage was 65 li to a group of farms called Chungchia Ta Men lying on the edge of the desert. For the first three hours the road, a good cart-track, lies through rich irrigated country, and for the rest of the way belts of sandy desert alternate with irrigated fields. The water, where it is not obtainable from irrigation channels, is very brackish. From Chungchia Ta Men the road continues north across a sandy plain between the desert on the right hand and cultivated lands on the left. Farms with wells are passed 20 and 40 li out. Hsiangchia Wan, the end of another stage of 65 li, is a thickly populated oasis on the edge of the desert, lying just east of a range of barren hills which form a prominent landmark from afar. The snow mountains behind Liangchou now fade out of sight. From here to Chenfan Hsien is a distance of 70 li. The trail still runs north over a sandy plain covered with scrub and rough grass with a river on the left hand, the latter formed by the junction of various streams and irrigation channels, and flowing north to water the Chenfan oasis and beyond to lose itself in the sands of the desert. Branches of this stream have to be forded at various points; though quite shallow, they contain dangerous quicksands and should be approached with care. Thirty-five